

been assembled and will go to Nauru to study the options. One of the plans includes agricultural revegetation for the dug out areas.
(*Pacific News Bulletin*, April 1994.)

Johnston Atoll. A dangerous chemical agent is reported to have escaped from the weapons destruction plant on this atoll, 1100 km southwest of Honolulu. US Army Chemical Weapons Destruction Agency issued a statement saying that the amount that escaped exceeded US environmental protection agency levels. Officials, however, have not determined where the chemical came from or how it escaped.
(*Pacific News Bulletin*, April 1994)

New Zealand. The movie *Rapa Nui* has been released in New Zealand (as well as Australia and Italy) and from the *New Zealand Herald*, for 6 May, comes a review by film critic Peter Calder. His comments are extensive but can be summed up in a few sentences: "The single redeeming feature about this catastrophic collision between Hollywood and Polynesia is that it will have a future in the festivals of seriously bad movies which independent cinemas run from time to time." And, "If *Rapa Nui* were intended as a comedy (and we could ignore the patronising depiction of the islanders as grunting, pop-eyed beasts) it might have had some merit." Calder concludes: "Local talent, here accorded the dignity of anonymity, is well represented and the bright side of all this is that some chronically impoverished actors made a dent in their home mortgages at the expense of producer Kevin Costner. But when they see this South Pacific *Dances With Statues*, they may wonder whether the sheer humiliation of it all was worth the pay packet."

Fiji. University of the South Pacific (Suva, Fiji) has a Tourism studies program that offers tourism specialization up to certificate and diploma levels. This program was created to meet the needs of many countries that have chosen the tourism option as a strategy for their economic development. In order to assist many countries in the South Pacific, the EC has been contributing millions of dollars since 1985 within the framework of the Pacific Regional Tourism Development Programme, PRTDP. The member countries of the Tourism Council of the South Pacific include the Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tahiti, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and Western Samoa.
(*USP Bulletin*, February 1994).

What's New in Hangaroa

★ A shark attack in the waters 150 miles south of Rapa Nui was reported in *El Mercurio* of Valparaiso (for 26 March). A 19 year old American student of oceanography, Heather Boswell, was swimming with five fellow crew members when they were attacked by a fifteen foot great white shark which came up suddenly and silently from the depths. In the encounter one crewman sustained severe gashes requiring over 160 stitches; others reached the Jacob's Ladder but had

difficulty scaling it and had to drop off the ladder into the zodiac. Ms Boswell was being lifted into the zodiac when she was assaulted by the shark. She lost one leg up to mid-thigh and suffered severe damage to the other. In the 12 hours it took for the scientific vessel *Discoverer* (a research ship for the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration) to reach Rapa Nui, she received assistance via radio from the doctors at the Hangaroa hospital. When the ship arrived to the island (at 3 a.m.), she was moved to the island's hospital by the rescue ship, *Tokerau*. An ambulance plane equipped with a surgery unit flew in from Panama and took her off the island. She is recovering in Seattle, Washington. All recreational swimming at sea has been cancelled by research vessels.

★ Chilean concert pianist, Roberto Bravo, gave two concerts on Rapa Nui recently. During his visit, he officially presented a piano and a music conservatory to the island. Bravo was accompanied by a young Rapanui student, Mahani Teave, who now studies in a conservatory on the continent. Bravo also listened to other young islanders of talent in order to help those with promise who wish to study on the continent. Japan has donated an appreciable quantity of recorders and flutes, an electronic organ, and percussion instruments, prompting the Ministry of Education to send a music teacher (piano and recorder) to the island. Asked why he has concentrated so much on Rapa Nui, Bravo replied, "I believe that one of the alternatives for the youngsters is art. And it is a gesture of respect because the cultural tradition of Isla de Pascua is transmitted in a large part through music. Also, the island impacted me personally. I must fulfill my promise."

★ *El Mercurio*, Valparaiso, for April 4th, 1994 carries an item by a University of Chile scientist, Oscar González-Ferrán, who charges that possible important clues are being lost due to the "profanity of a sacred site for investigation". The professor, who is describing the archaeological reconstruction of the site of Tongariki, says the work constitutes the loss of a site "... the clues left by nature have been destroyed. ... erased with shovels and cranes".

González-Ferrán goes on to say that the "destruction of the *moai* was not the result of wars, but from earth tremors". In his opinion, the evidence of the directional forces of the seismic waves and their effects on the *moai* are preserved and can be clearly seen around the island. He has been working with a grant from FONDECYT to study the impact of such natural phenomena on the island. He noted that 80% of the *moai* fell towards the west/northwest and only 20% in other directions; this indicates the direction of the seismic waves as coming from the west-northwest.

A reply to the above newspaper item was made by Claudio Cristino, who has been in charge of the reconstruction of Ahu Tongariki. In an article in *El Mercurio* for 11 April, Cristino replied: "It is of great seriousness if that article causes the public to believe that deliberate destruction has been done to an important archaeological monument by a 'foreign commercial enterprise' without the intervention of

government scientists nor the Easter Island community.” And, “The reconstruction project of Ahu Tongariki is a complex multinational scientific effort, sponsored by the Chilean government and presided over by Oscar Pinochet de la Barra in order to coordinate studies and agreements between the various entities involved, particularly the foreign counterpart. The commercial enterprise alluded to by Mr. González-Ferrán is the Tadano company of Japan which donated a crane and the necessary resources in the amount of 1.5 million dollars with the purpose of contributing to the protection and recuperation of the island’s patrimony. The government of Chile signed a contract with Tadano; and Japanese counterparts on the project were scientists from the Nara Institute.” Cristino also noted that Tadano did not have any influence in the decision of reconstructing Tongariki nor in the scientific decisions concerning the project.

Cristino emphasized that the agreement with Tadano ended in May of 1993 and, from that time, work has continued as additional resources were available from a private foundation. The reconstruction of the *ahu*, which has 15 statues weighing from 35 to 80 tons, will end next June or July and it will be “. . . the most important archaeological monument of the insular Pacific.”

Cristino ends by discussing Gonzalez-Ferran’s idea that the statues fell due to seismic activity, citing the fact that although he (Cristino) was part of that study, he disagreed with the earthquake theory: “In the island nearly 300 ceremonial structures have been described and studied. . . . Statues standing on the central platform always faced toward the land, toward the ceremonial square and the village, never toward the sea. Almost 900 statues have been recorded in all the island, 422 of them associated with ceremonial platforms.” Cristino added, “It is easy to demonstrate by records, plans, photographs, and hundreds of published titles that the statues were thrown down from their pedestals intentionally by destroying the base of the statue itself. Most lay prostrate on the ruins of the platforms. . . . of the statues overthrown at *ahu* along the west, north, northwest and northeast coasts, most of those on the northwest and northeast coasts appear systematically overthrown toward the land. This is to say that towards the south, southeast, east-southeast, and east, statues clearly fell in the opposite direction to the push or direction of seismic waves coming from the west-northwest.” And, “Eighteen years of fieldwork allow us to affirm that the above-mentioned investigator is not correct. The possibility that a tremor originating in the west- northwest that overthrew *moai* in the southeast coast exists, but we would have to accept that the ones from the other coasts fell by other causes.”

The debate continues, see below:

★ From ‘Cartas’, *El Mercurio de Santiago* for 12 May, comes a reply to Cristino’s Letter to the Editor:

“Due to the gratuitous insult that Señor Claudio Cristino makes of my position as an academic and investigator in his article published in *El Mercurio*, ‘Scientist Refutes Denunciation of Damage in Easter Island’, I am obliged to

clarify his statements.

“In declarations to *El Mercurio*’s Easter Island correspondent, I referred as much to the results reached in one of my recent projects of investigation on the island as to the need for some areas to be preserved to make evident the occurrence of natural processes ‘as sites of special scientific interest’ such as those associated with investigations in geology, geophysics and seismic resistant structures.

“In the article I neither attack nor offend anyone. What I said is within the range of free expression and the right that any responsible academic professor or investigator has to plead for the preservation of evidence in the field. For Mr. Cristino, ‘a scientist’ who has lived on the island for 18 years, these sites are ‘simply piles of stones’ and he does not find anything more academic than personal disrepute to justify himself for something he declares is his responsibility.

“Mr. Cristino refers boringly to the ‘project of reconstruction of Ahu Tongariki’, supporting himself and hiding behind a battery of specialists and institutions that would be involved in this reconstruction, as well as the expenditure of the not-unappreciable sum of 1.5 million dollars donated by Tadano, money which was spent in the yet-unfinished reconstruction. This information is very interesting for it now is made known publicly for the first time, and is good for the transparency of the project.

“However, I believe that this extensive commentary is being used by Mr. Cristino to justify the disappearance of a ‘site of special scientific interest’.

“In this respect, I must say that I have never referred to the validity or not of the Archaeological Project in itself, or to the good or bad qualities of the reconstruction at Tongariki, as I am not an archaeologist nor a specialist in reconstruction.

“There are many points left to refute but in my capacity as a titled professor, I am far from entering an inadequate debate. I have only given reply to those more grotesque points. The rest will be clarified within the University.”

Oscar González-Ferrán, Professor, Department of Geology and Geophysics, University of Chile.

[Editor’s Note: translation by Rose Marie Wallace, with thanks]

★ Improving education on Rapa Nui is a priority according to *El Mercurio* (for 15 April). A member of the Investment Commission, Rodrigo Oliver, and the Vice President of the Environment Medium Commission, Oriele Zencovich, urged that mechanisms be established to improve the education of Rapa Nui young people by increasing the number of native teachers in the school and making it self-sufficient. CORE (Consejo Regional of the V Region) noted the importance of having a member from the Ministry of Planning on the island to prioritize works and assign regional resources. Oliver stressed that the idea of a vocational school as promoted by the island’s mayor has potential.

Srta. Zencovich stated that the islanders have the ability to excel but not the tools, as is shown in the college examinations: only rarely do islanders get good scores. She